

Bill Summary

H.R. 986: Eightmile Wild and Scenic River Act (Rep. Courtney, D-CT)

H.R. 986 would designate 25.3 miles of the Eightmile River and its tributaries in Connecticut as a national scenic river. The river has been studied by the National Park Service and found to be eligible for designation. The five segments that would be designated by the bill would be managed according to a plan produced pursuant to the 2001 Eightmile River Wild and Scenic River Study Act (Public Law 107-65). HR 986 expressly and unambiguously forbids condemnation by the federal government, both by reference to the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and by a separate, explicit provision of the bill.

The legislation, which is supported by the Administration, has broad bipartisan support, including the entire Connecticut congressional delegation, the Republican governor of the state, the Connecticut Legislature and all of the affected local communities.

Representative Joe Courtney introduced the legislation on February 12, 2007 and the Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands held a hearing on the bill on April 17, 2007 during which the Administration and a public witness testified in support of the measure. The Subcommittee favorably approved the bill with an amendment by voice vote on April 19, 2007 and the Natural Resources Committee ordered the bill, as amended, favorably reported to the House by voice vote on May 2, 2007. On July 10, 2007, the House considered H.R. 986 under Suspension of the Rules. Although the bill received a clear majority on a vote of 239-173, it failed to receive the 2/3rd necessary for passage.